

Broderbund and is still fondly remembered today. The player's mission as super-crack helicopter pilot is to rescue survivors from a horizontally scrolling warzone. To do this the player must land near the waving refugees and wait for them to board. This can be quite harrowing at times as you're a proverbial sitting duck for all the enemy gun installations and machine-gunning planes which constantly lay siege.

The player's copter is equipped with a rapid-firing cannon and a limited number of bombs with which to protect himself. And that's really all there is to it - however, like *Defender*, *Choplifter* is one of those games that, once played, is never forgotten. Fast action, challenging game task and a password system help make this one of the best games out on the Gameboy, and a must for any action fans collection.

☆☆☆☆☆

CISCO HEAT



Price Amiga £25.99
Genre Arcade Blast
Publisher Image Works

In the light of a whole bunch of driving games, some of which have been nothing short of excellent, (*Lotus 2*, *Grand Prix*) Image Works' launch of this rather dreadful title couldn't have come at a worse time.

Not only will the consumer have had his fill of driving in general, but he will also be fully aware that it's possible to produce auto-action games a thousand times better than this.

The aim is to race a souped up police car through the hilly streets of San Francisco, avoiding taxi-cabs, trams and skyscrapers in an attempt to emerge as the top cop driver in the city.

Quite aside from the 3D routines which make *Turbo Outrun* look polished and some astonishingly dull courses, *Cisco Heat* stalls at virtually every corner. The races themselves are painful and frustrating, the crowd graphics are basically a single graphic block duplicated to fill the space, the police car crashes into skyscrapers only a fraction larger than itself, and the corner turning routine, however brave the attempt, is a catastrophe.

Mind you, the sound of the car's horn is quite good.

☆

CIVILIZATION



Price IBM PC £34.99
Genre Strategy
Publisher MicroProse

American games design guru Sid Meier, fresh from his success with the brilliant *Railroad Tycoon*, has surpassed himself with this latest effort, which can truly be said to boggle the mind in terms of depth, scale and scope. Adopting the same functional top-down presentation format of *Tycoon*, the game charges the player with the task of building a civilisation, from a bunch of primitive settlers in an unexplored, uncharted world, to a global empire capable of space travel, nuclear power and the other trappings 20th Century life.

The range of factors and elements that play a part in the game is quite simply awesome, as the player's people advances and expands, founding cities, setting sail across the water, making technological discoveries and building armed forces - all while computer-controlled 'rival' empires do the same. Along the way the player must set taxes, maintain civil order, negotiate with other nations, care for the environment and take part in various arms and space races.

Civilization is undoubtedly the most involved strategy game ever conceived, and as such many less committed or novice gamers are likely to be swamped by the game's maze-like intricacies. For those willing to invest the time and effort, however, *Civilization* pays off like no other. Wonderful.

☆☆☆☆☆

CONAN THE CIMMERIAN



Price IBM PC £29.99
Genre Role Playing Game
Publisher Virgin Games

The problem with *Conan* is that he doesn't really know whether he wants to be a serious game or a funny game. The opening sequence is a mixture of pratfall comedy and intended menace, accompanied by some of the most awful music I've ever heard. (While some people may argue it's fashionably dissonant, I reckon it sounds like the twangings of a Fisher Price "My First Guitar" being played in the bath.)

Anyway, the curious mixture of semi-plan view exploration and side-on hack-

ing works reasonably well, with Conan looking every inch the super-hero he's supposed to be. And there's plenty to explore.

Even the adventuring side is pretty good, and Conan can interact (albeit on a pretty basic level) with every character he encounters.

So if you feel that there is space on your shelf for yet another revenge-quest game, and can live with the atmosphere-crushing laughs, it may be worth a look.

☆☆☆

CRUISE FOR A CORPSE



Price Amiga £24.99
Genre Adventure
Publisher Delphine/US Gold

The plot for *Cruise for a Corpse* is firmly rooted in the Agatha Christie 'isolated location, plenty of suspects' crime story tradition, detailing how the player is invited to a Greek tycoon's yacht for a well-earned holiday only to get there and find his host bumped off by an unknown murderer. Before you can say 'Inspector Wexford' the player is forced to don poncy moustache and tufty sideburns to solve the heinous crime.

After a lot of pre-release interest from the press, there were high hopes for *Cruise for a Corpse*. Is it the excellent game everyone seemed to think it's be? Well, yes... and no. In the graphics and sound department it's exemplary, with large, fluidly-animated sprites moving over exquisitely detailed backgrounds and plenty of suitable tunes and samples playing away in the background. All conspire to generate an excellent sense of mood and atmosphere.

The player directs his on-screen character ('Raoul') via the mouse. By clicking the mouse pointer on objects of interest, a menu appears listing the various things the player can do with the selected item (i.e. 'Open' or 'Examine' hat box). Movement around the yacht is effected by walking Raoul from location to location by clicking on exits to the current location, such as doors or hallways, or more quickly by calling up the yacht map and 'sending' Raoul immediately from place to place. As a user interface it's difficult to think of another as intuitive and easy to use.

The major problem with *Cruise for a Corpse* is its pace. The animation, though wondrous, is slow. Examining the contents of a room can become quite painful, as Raoul slowly turns, walks, turns, bends down, examines the item only for a message to appear stating that "There is nothing of interest here". Equally annoying is the frequent though inevitable accessing and swapping of five (count 'em) game disks. All too often the player's enthusiasm for clue hunting can be severely dampened by the reduction of the game's speed to near snail's pace. Less important, some of the generally excellent French-English translation is a bit dubious in places, such as the Cabin Boy who is described as "dynamic".

Those comments apart, anyone with the patience to sit through the occasional doldrums will find *Cruise for a Corpse* a superb buy, heaped with quality presentation and atmosphere and presenting a big enough game task to satisfy even the greatest sleuth.

☆☆☆☆☆

DEATHBRINGER



Price Atari ST £25.99
Genre Beat-'Em-Up
Publisher Empire

There's this sword, right. These evil wizards have magically given it the ability to absorb the souls of anyone it slays. Their intention is to use it to get rid off their goody-goody though thick-thick nemesis Karn, a barbarian so stupid he can't even spell his own name right. However, luck isn't on the wizards' side, and the sword finds its way into Karn's calloused hands. Hardly believing his luck, Karn sets out to give the sword back to the wizards - in style. Basically it's all a thinly-veiled excuse for a sideways scrolling bloodfest of hacking and slaying, with Karn plowing through wave after wave of bizarre monsters.

Deathbringer boasts some of the most impressive parallax-scrolling backgrounds yet seen, even if they are somewhat lacking in colour. The sprites are well-drawn with a nice line in humour, but they're rather garish in a monochromatic sort of way. But despite its good graphics and adequate sound, *Deathbringer's* real problem is that it's basically a bit dull. The combat moves are limited in range and slow to implement and just wandering along, end-